

Institution of proceedings¹

(Individual applications under Article 34 of the Convention)

I. General

1. An application under Article 34 of the Convention must be submitted in writing. No application may be made by telephone. Except as provided otherwise by Rule 47 of the Rules of Court, only a completed application form will interrupt the running of the six-month time-limit set out in Article 35 § 1 of the Convention. An application form is available online from the Court's website². Applicants are strongly encouraged to download and print the application form instead of contacting the Court for a paper copy to be sent by post. By doing this, applicants will save time and will be in a better position to ensure that their completed application form is submitted within the six-month time-limit. Help with the completion of the various fields is available online.

2. An application must be sent to the following address:

The Registrar
European Court of Human Rights
Council of Europe
F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex

3. Applications sent by fax will not interrupt the running of the six-month time-limit set out in Article 35 § 1 of the Convention. Applicants must also dispatch the signed original by post within the same six-month time-limit.

4. An applicant should be diligent in corresponding with the Court's Registry. A delay in replying or failure to reply may be regarded as a sign that the applicant is no longer interested in pursuing his or her application.

II. Form and contents

5. The submissions in the application form concerning the facts, complaints and compliance with the requirements of exhaustion of domestic remedies and the time-limit set out in Article 35 § 1 of the Convention must respect the conditions set out in Rule 47 of the Rules of Court. Any additional submissions must not exceed 20 pages (see Rule 47 § 2) and should:

- a) be in an A4 page format with a margin of not less than 3.5 cm;
- b) be wholly legible and, if typed, the text should be at least 12 pt in the body of the document and 10 pt in the footnotes, with one and a half line spacing;
- c) have all numbers expressed as figures;
- d) have pages numbered consecutively;

1. Practice direction issued by the President of the Court in accordance with Rule 32 of the Rules of Court on 1 November 2003 and amended on 22 September 2008, 24 June 2009 and 6 November 2013. This practice direction supplements Rules 45 and 47.

2. www.echr.coe.int

- e) be divided into numbered paragraphs;
- f) be divided into headings corresponding to "Facts", "Complaints or statements of violations", "Information about the exhaustion of domestic remedies and compliance with the time-limit set out in Article 35 § 1".
6. All fields in the application form must be filled in by use of words. Avoid using symbols, signs or abbreviations. Explain in words even if the answer is negative or the question does not appear relevant.
7. An applicant who has already had a previous application or applications decided by the Court or who has an application or applications pending before the Court must inform the Registry accordingly, stating the application number or numbers.
8. (a) Where an applicant does not wish to have his or her identity disclosed, he or she should state the reasons for his or her request in writing, pursuant to Rule 47 § 4.
- (b) The applicant should also state whether, in the event of anonymity being authorised by the President of the Chamber, he or she wishes to be designated by his or her initials or by a single letter (e.g., "X", "Y", "Z", etc.).
9. The applicant or the applicant's representative must sign the application form. If represented, the applicant must sign the letter of authority, which forms part of the application form. Neither the application form nor the letter can be signed *per procuracionem* (p.p.).

III. Grouped applications and multiple applicants

10. Where an applicant or representative lodges complaints on behalf of two or more applicants whose applications are based on different facts, a separate application form should be filled in for each individual giving all the information required. The documents relevant to each applicant should also be annexed to that individual's application form.
11. Where there are more than five applicants, the representative should provide – in addition to the application forms and documents – a table setting out for each applicant the required personal information, an example of which may be downloaded from the Court's website¹. Where the representative is a lawyer, this table should also be provided in electronic form.
12. In cases of large groups of applicants or applications, applicants or their representatives may be directed by the Court to provide the text of their submissions or documents by electronic or other means. Other directions may be given by the Court as to steps required to facilitate the effective and speedy processing of applications.

IV. Failure to comply with requests for information or directions

13. Failure, within the specified time-limit, to provide further information or documents at the Court's request or to comply with the Court's directions as to the form or manner of the lodging of an application – including grouped applications or applications by multiple applicants – may result, depending on the stage reached in the proceedings, in the complaint(s) not being examined by the Court or the application(s) being declared inadmissible or struck out of the Court's list of cases.

1. www.echr.coe.int